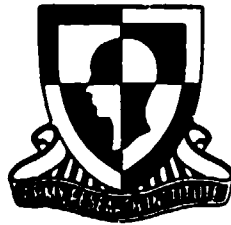
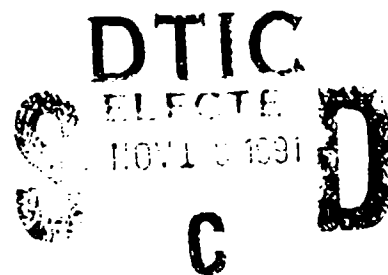


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Research Product 91-20



Army Family Research Program: Select Preliminary Findings on Army Family Support During Operation Desert Shield

July 1991

**Personnel Utilization Technical Area
Manpower and Personnel Research Laboratory**

U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences

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**Army Family Research Program: Select Preliminary
Findings on Army Family Support During
Operation Desert Shield**

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FOREWORD

The Army Family Research Program (AFRP) is a 5-year integrated research program started in November 1986, in response to research mandated by the Chief of Staff of the Army's White Paper, 1983: The Army Family and subsequently by The Army Family Action Plans (1984-1989). The objective of the research is to support the Community and Family Support Center (CFSC) and the Army Family Action Plans through research products that will (1) determine the demographic characteristics of Army families, (2) identify positive motivators and negative detractors to soldiers remaining in the Army, and (3) investigate the determinants of operational readiness.

The U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) is conducting this research pursuant to the Letter of Agreement between ARI and CFSC dated 18 December 1986, "Sponsorship of ARI Army Family Research." This research is an important part of the mission of ARI's Personnel Utilization Technical Area (PUTA) to investigate the relationship between family factors and soldier retention and readiness and to explore family adaptation to the Army environment.

This report is based on a briefing given on 17 January 1991 by ARI to the Commanding General of CFSC, Major General F. Marty. At CFSC's request, selected portions of that briefing are being published as a report to be distributed to the wide range of professionals charged with caring for Army families.



EDGAR M. JOHNSON
Technical Director

**ARMY FAMILY RESEARCH PROGRAM: SELECT PRELIMINARY FINDINGS
ON ARMY FAMILY SUPPORT DURING OPERATION DESERT SHIELD**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research Requirement:

This report is part of the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences' (ARI) ongoing research in support of the Community and Family Support Center (CFSC) and the Army Family Action Plan (AFAP). The purpose of this report is to present comparative data on changes in soldier attitudes toward the Army family support systems before and since the start of Operation Desert Shield (ODS).

Procedure:

The analyses in this report are based on two data sources: (1) a survey of soldiers conducted by ARI between February and December of 1989 (respondents herein referred to as pre-ODS soldiers) and (2) a survey of soldiers conducted by the U.S. Army Personnel Integration Center (USAPIC) during December 1990 (respondents referred to as ODS-era soldiers). Identical questions were included in both surveys (RTI, 1990). The number of soldiers in the ARI and USAPIC samples were 6,495 and 4,662, respectively. Only active duty soldiers currently in CONUS locations were included in the analysis.

In addition to comparisons for all CONUS-based active duty soldiers, we have included analyses for three rank groups: officers, NCOs, and junior enlisted soldiers.

Findings:

In comparison to pre-ODS soldiers, ODS-era soldiers have their personal affairs in better order, are more confident in their spouses' ability to cope with separation, and are more certain that they can get help from Army sources. In addition, ODS-era soldiers are more likely than peacetime soldiers to believe that leaders are concerned about soldiers' families.

However, Operation Desert Shield appears to have affected the family adjustment of junior enlisted soldiers. The family adjustment of ODS-era junior enlisted soldiers is significantly lower than that of pre-ODS junior enlisted (although, for the

Army as a whole, the family adjustment of pre-ODS soldiers is comparable to that of ODS-era soldiers).

Utilization of Findings:

CFSC is already using these findings to fine-tune family support during Operation Desert Storm and beyond. Wider dissemination of findings in this report will expand that process.

**ARMY FAMILY RESEARCH PROGRAM: SELECT PRELIMINARY FINDINGS
ON ARMY FAMILY SUPPORT DURING OPERATION DESERT SHIELD**

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**ARMY FAMILY RESEARCH PROGRAM: SELECT PRELIMINARY
FINDINGS ON ARMY FAMILY SUPPORT DURING OPERATION DESERT SHIELD**

Background

The Army Family Research Program (AFRP) is a five-year effort to examine the well-being of Army families and the extent to which families affect soldier retention and readiness.

As part of this program, the U.S. Army Research Institute (ARI) investigated changes in soldier attitudes toward the Army family support systems since the start of Operation Desert Shield (ODS). This report presents select preliminary findings of the effort. The figures and analyses in this report were prepared by Dr. Bruce Bell and Dr. Ronald Tiggie of ARI. If you have any questions or comments, contact either one of them at (703) 274-8119 or DSN 284-8866. Other reports on families and ODS will be distributed as soon as they become available.

Approach

ARI compared the responses of pre-ODS active duty soldiers to those of ODS-era active duty soldiers on questionnaire items designed to assess soldier attitudes toward the Army family support systems. The pre-ODS analyses are based on a survey conducted by ARI between February and December of 1989. The ODS-era analyses are based on a soldier survey conducted by the U.S. Army Personnel Integration Center (USAPIC) during December, 1990.

The pre-ODS data are from the 1989 world-wide survey of Army soldiers, their spouses and first- and second-line supervisors collected as part of the AFRP. The complete database, which is a representative sample of Army personnel in paygrades E2-06, includes over 11,000 soldiers and 3,400 spouses. The data reported in this document are the results of analyses on only those 6,495 soldiers who were in CONUS locations.

The ODS-era data were obtained through one of USAPIC's biannual surveys of military personnel. AFRP researchers had the opportunity to submit questionnaire items to USAPIC for inclusion in the Fall, 1990 survey. At this time, USAPIC surveyed 4,662 CONUS-based soldiers. We were, therefore, able to compare the responses of the 1989 AFRP sample to those of the 1990 USAPIC sample. Such comparisons are useful in determining the extent to which intervening events (such as ODS) influence soldiers' perceptions.

For our analyses, certain criteria were adopted for interpreting the degree of attitude change. If the pre-ODS and ODS-era samples differed less than 1 standard error, which equated to 0-3%, the samples were considered essentially the same with respect to the characteristic in question. Differences of 1 standard error, which equated to 4%-7%, will be considered slight, and differences exceeding 2 standard errors or 8% will be considered marked.

Figure 1: Extent of spouses financial and legal planning for soldier TDX/Deployment.

Survey questions:

Does your spouse have power of attorney in case you are away?

Do you and your spouse have a joint checking account?

Does your spouse have the equivalent of 2 weeks of your pay on hand or in savings in case of an emergency?

Overall:

o All ranks of soldiers are markedly more likely to have a joint checking account than they are to have 2 weeks pay in savings or power of attorney. Having a joint checking account and 2 weeks pay saved varied in direct proportion to rank. The higher the rank, the greater was the likelihood of having a joint checking account and 2 weeks pay saved.

Pre-ODS vs ODS-era comparisons :

- Pre-ODS soldiers(Total) were as likely as ODS-era soldiers to report having power of attorney, joint checking accounts and 2 weeks pay in savings.
- ODS-era officers did not differ significantly from their pre-ODS cohort on any of the three issues examined.
- ODS-era NCOs were as likely as pre-ODS NCOs to report having power of attorney.
- Pre-ODS NCOs and junior enlisted soldiers were as likely as their ODS-era peers to report having joint checking accounts and 2 weeks pay in savings.
- ODS-era junior enlisted soldiers reported slightly higher rates of power of attorney than their pre-ODS peers.

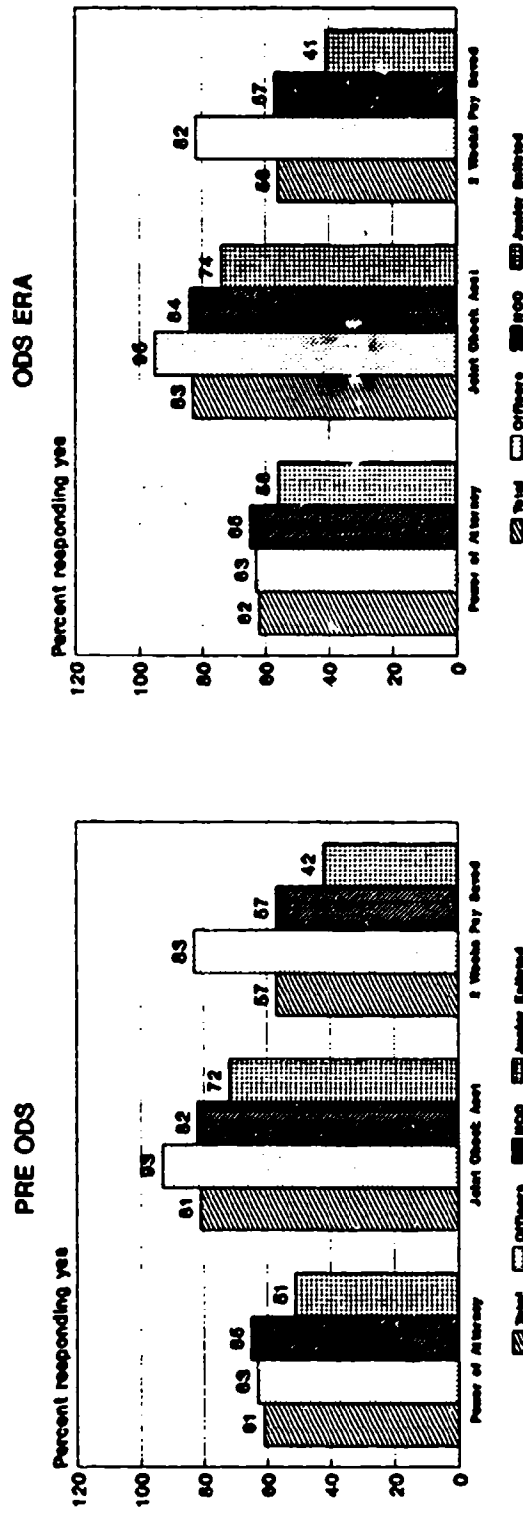


Figure 1. Extent of spouse's financial and legal plans for soldier TDY / deployment.

Figure 2: Worry about family expenses when away or on assignment

Survey question:

How often do you worry about your family having enough money to meet expenses, pay bills, etc., when you are away?

Overall:

- About one-fourth of active soldiers, in general, are worried about family expenses while away or on assignment. The lower the rank, the greater is the tendency to worry about expenses. Junior enlisted soldiers worry the most and officers worry the least.

Pre-ODS vs ODS-era comparisons:

- There are no significant rank differences between pre-ODS and ODS-era soldiers as a whole or within rank groups on the frequency with which soldiers worried about family expenses while on assignment.

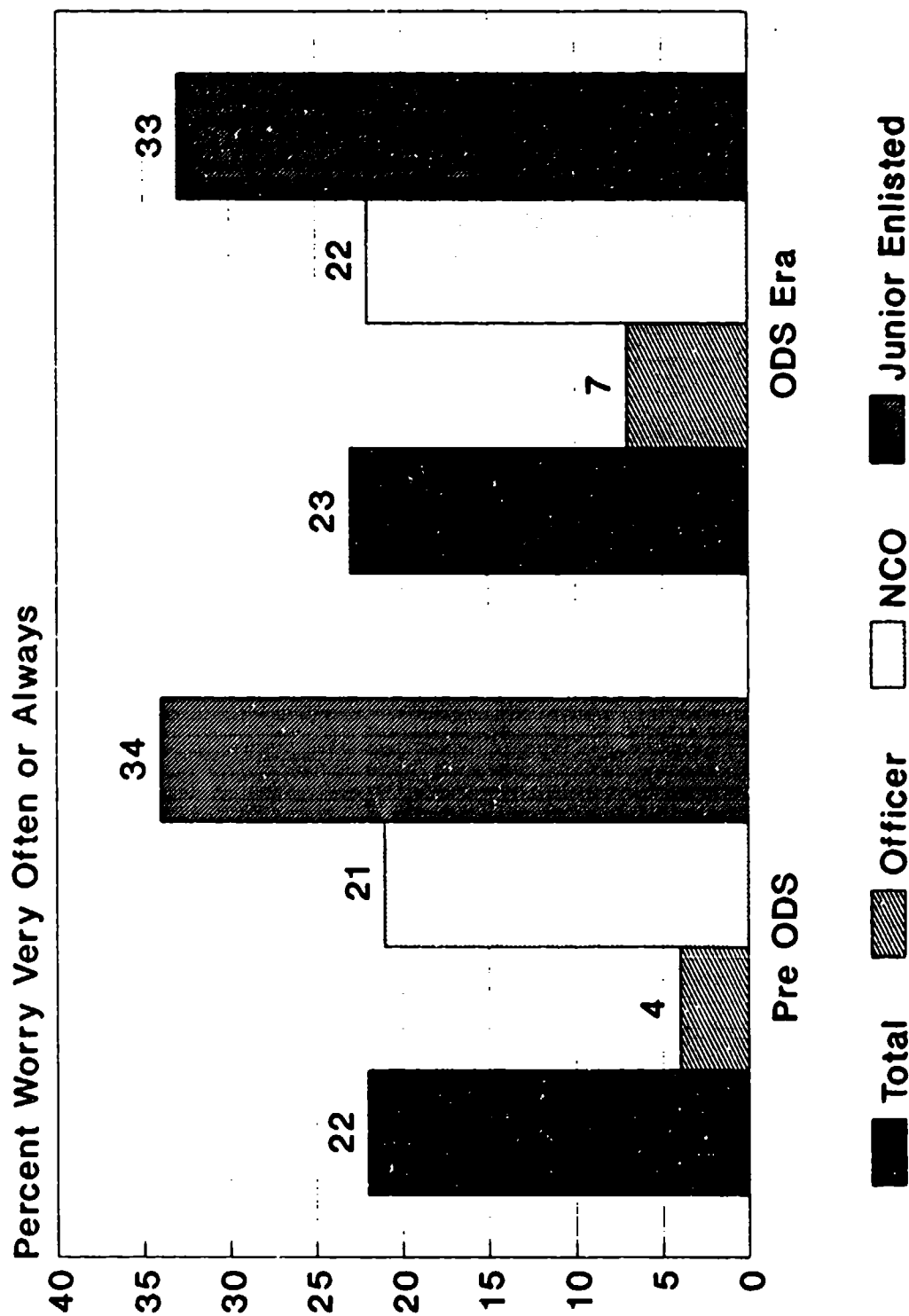


Figure 2. Worry about family expenses when away on assignment.

Figure 3: Worry about family's safety in event of war when deployed

Survey question:

How often do you worry about your family's safety in the event of war when you are away?

Overall:

- Overall about a third of the ODS-era soldiers worried about their families safety in the event of war when they are away. The tendency to worry varies inversely with rank. Officers worry least and junior enlisted worry the most.

Pre-ODS vs ODS-era comparisons:

- ODS-era soldiers (Total) were as likely as pre-ODS soldiers to report worry about their family's safety in the event of war when they are away.
- ODS-era officers were slightly more likely than pre-ODS officers to report worry about their family's safety in the event of war when they are away.
- ODS-era NCOs and junior enlisted soldiers were as likely as their pre-ODS peers to report worry about their family's safety in the event of war

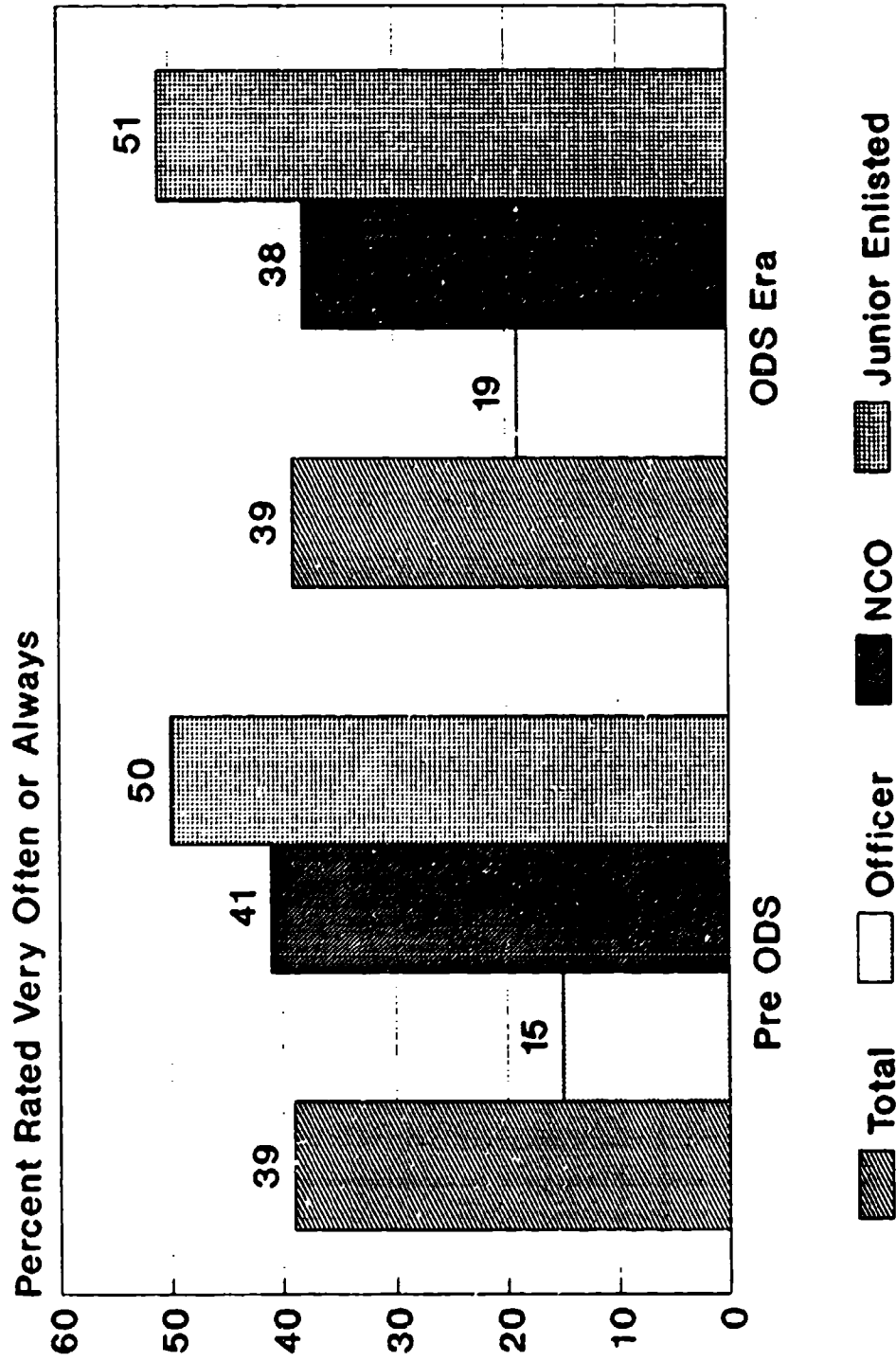


Figure 3. Worry about family's safety in event of war when deployed.

Figure 4: Extent spouse could cope with separation from soldier due to TDY/deployment.

Survey questions:

- How much of a problem would your spouse have coping if you had to go away on an Army assignment, such as TDY or deployment, for...
 - Less than 2 weeks
 - 2 weeks to a month
 - Several months
 - Six months

Overall:

- For active duty soldiers, in general, and junior enlisted in particular, as the length of separation increases, so does the percentage of soldiers who believe their spouses will have difficulty coping.

Pre-ODS vs ODS-era comparisons:

- There is no difference between the proportions of pre-ODS and ODS-era soldiers whose spouses would have difficulty coping with separations of 30 days or less. This is true for all rank groups and active duty soldiers, in general.
- For separations of several months, pre-ODS officers and NCOs are as likely as their ODS-era peers to report that their spouse would have serious problems coping with separation. In contrast, pre-ODS junior enlisted are slightly more likely than their ODS-era cohort to report greater concerns for this issue.
- For separations lasting six months, pre-ODS NCOs and junior enlisted are markedly more likely than ODS-era peers to report that their spouses would have difficulty coping with separation.
- Junior enlisted soldiers are markedly more likely than officers or NCOs to report that their spouses would have serious difficulty coping with a separation of six months.

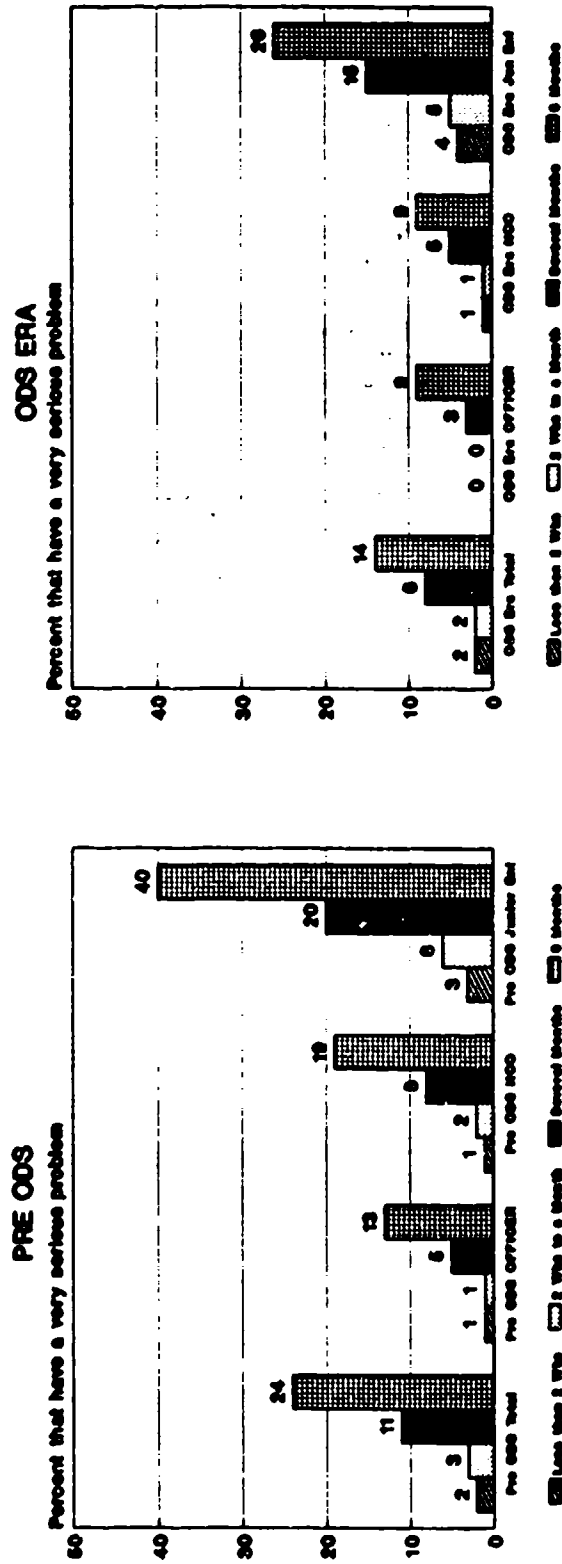


Figure 4. Extent spouse could cope with separation from soldier due to TDY / deployment.

Figure 5: People you can count on for help with a family or personal problem

Survey questions:

To what extent can you count on the following people for help with a personal or family problem?

- A leader at your place of duty
- Someone else you work with
- A neighbor or friend who is in the Army
- A neighbor or friend who is not in the Army
- Staff of an Army service agency (example, ACS or chaplain)
- Parents or other close relatives (not your spouse or children)

Overall:

- Soldiers are more likely to report that they could count on their parents and relatives than on any other source of support. Soldiers were also more likely to report that they could count on more help from Army co-workers than from Army Service Agencies.

Pre-ODS vs ODS-era comparisons:

- In general, more ODS-era soldiers reported being able to count on others for help than pre-ODS soldiers.
- ODS-era soldiers were markedly more likely than pre-ODS soldiers to report being able to count on work leaders for help with a problem.
- ODS-era soldiers were slightly more likely than pre-ODS soldiers to report being able to count on co-workers, and Army service agencies.

TOTAL ACTIVE DUTY SOLDIERS

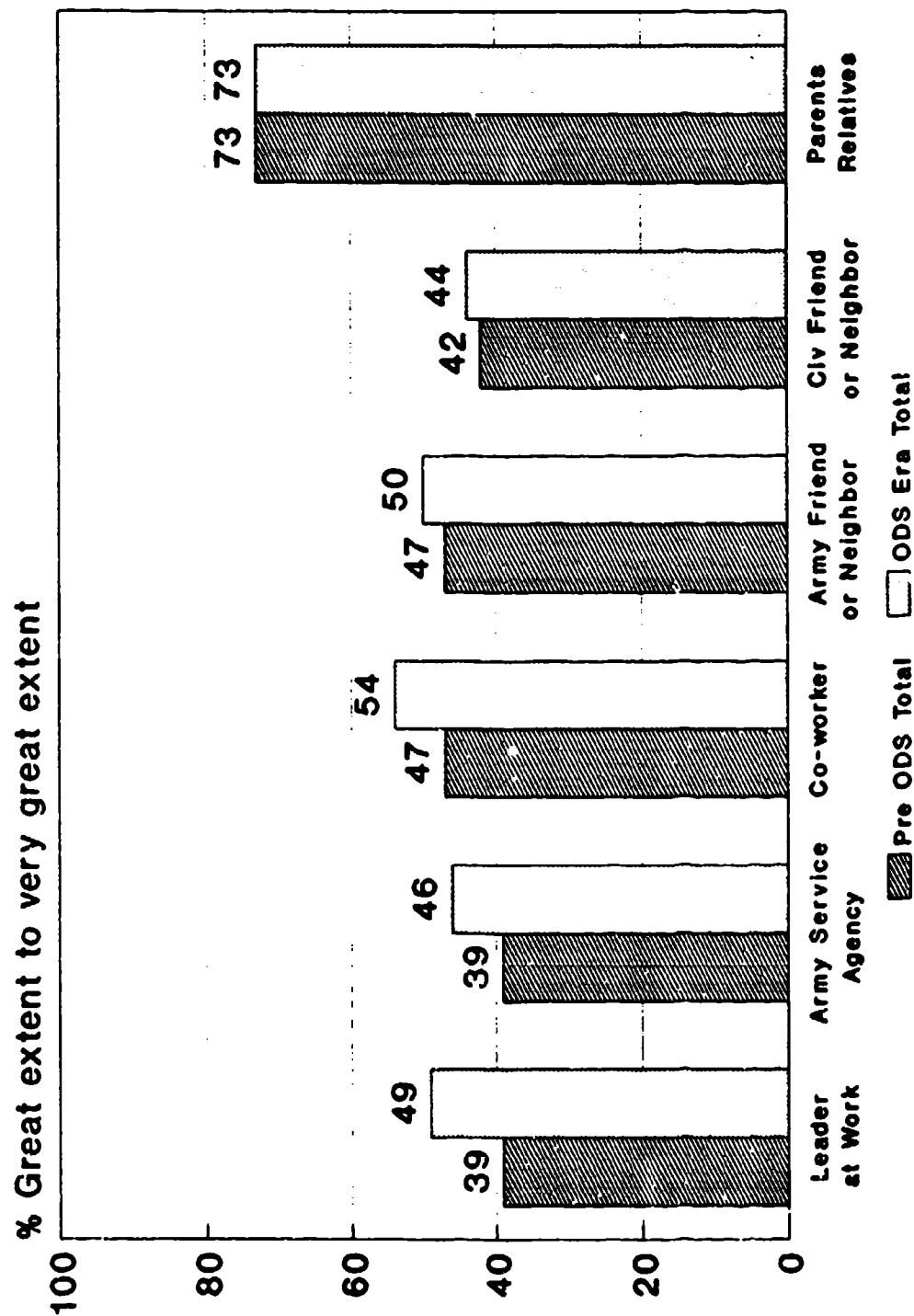


Figure 5. People you can count on for help with a family or personal problem.

Figure 6: People you can count on for help with a family or personal problem:
Leader at work

Survey questions:

To what extent can you count on the following people for help with a personal or family problem?

A leader at your place of duty

Pre-ODS vs ODS-era comparisons:

- All three ODS era rank groups, officers, NCOs, and junior enlisted were markedly more likely than pre-ODS era soldiers to report that they could count on a leader at work for help with a personal problem.
- Perceptions of the helpfulness of leaders at work varied as a function of rank. The higher the rank the more likely a leader at work was perceived to be helpful by both the pre-ODS soldiers and the ODS-era soldiers.

People you can count on for help with
a family or personal problem:
LEADER AT WORK

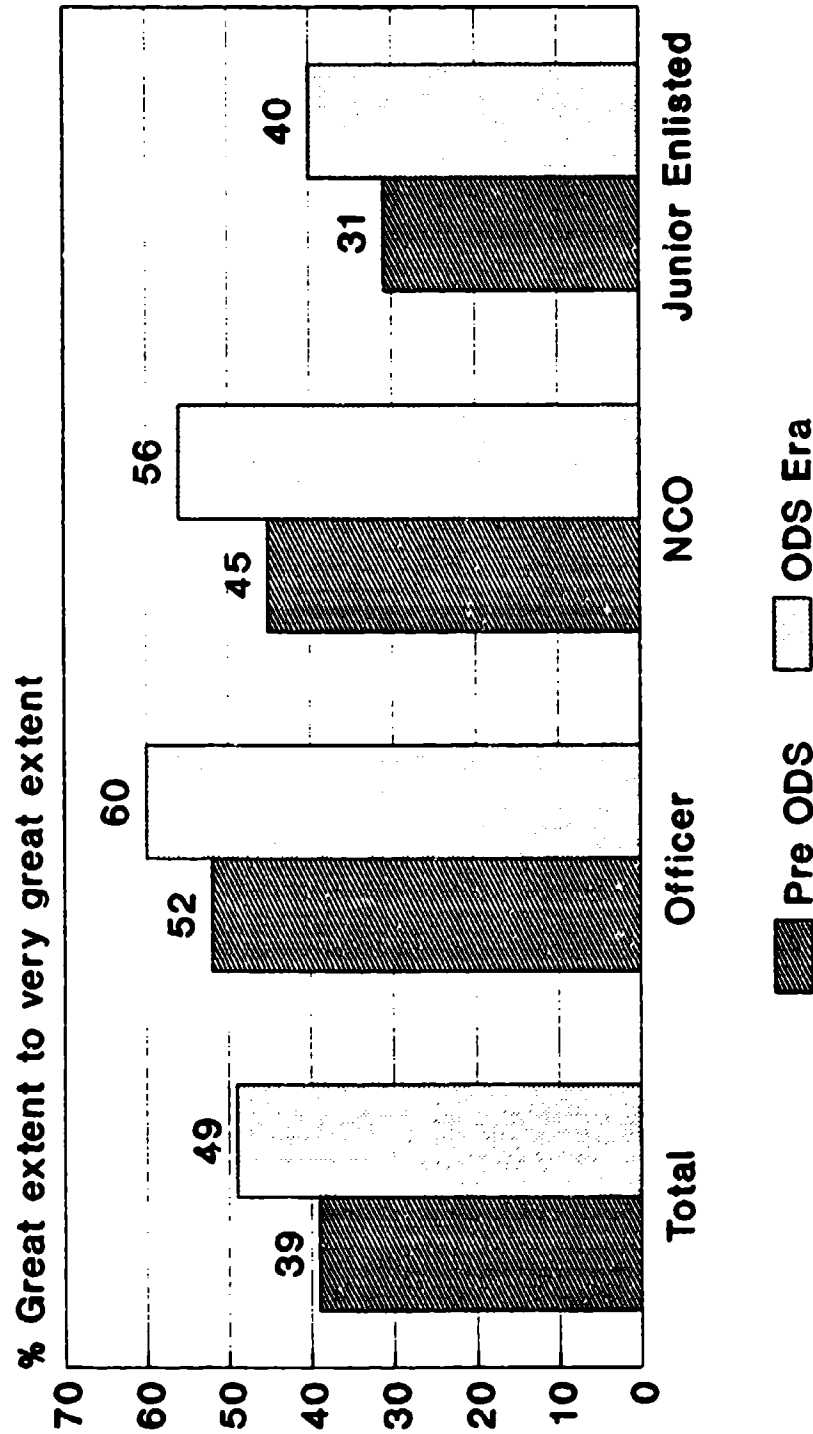


Figure 6. Leader at Work

Figure 7: People you can count on for help with a family or personal problem:
Army service agency

Survey questions:

To what extent can you count on the following people for help with a personal or family problem?

Staff of an Army service agency (example, ACS or chaplain)

Pre-ODS vs ODS-era comparisons:

- All three ODS era rank groups, officers, NCOs, and junior enlisted were markedly more likely than pre-ODS era soldiers to report that they could count on an Army service agency for help with a personal problem.
- Among the rank groups, ODS-era NCOs reported a slightly higher level of confidence in receiving assistance from an Army service agency for a personal problem than did officers or junior enlisted personnel.

People you can count on for help with
a family or personal problem:
ARMY SERVICE AGENCY

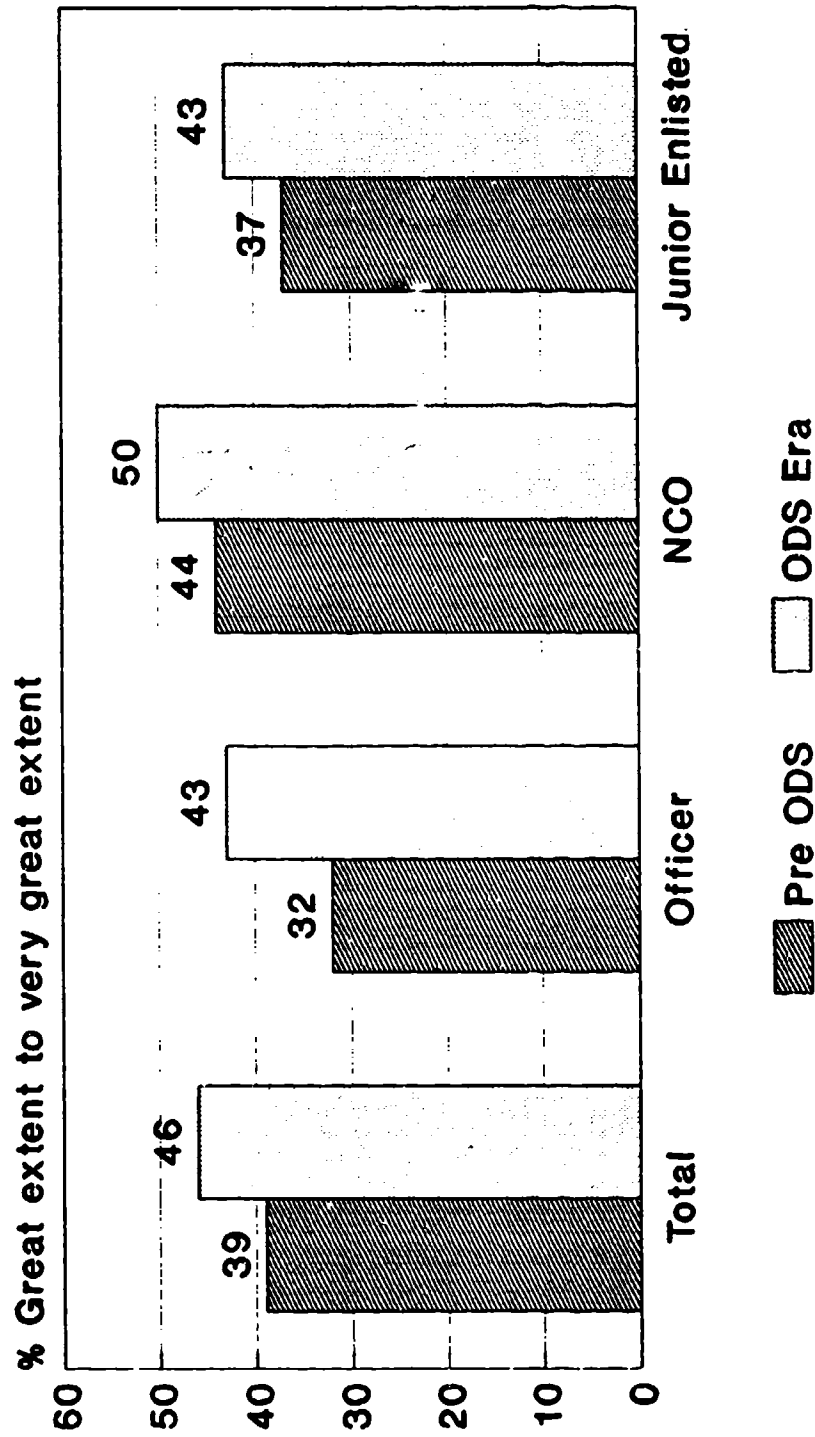


Figure 7. Army Service Agency

Figure 8: People you can count on for help with a family or personal problem: Co-worker

Survey questions:

To what extent can you count on the following people for help with a personal or family problem?

Someone else you work with

Pre-ODS vs ODS-era comparisons:

- For both pre-ODS and ODS-era soldiers confidence in assistance from a coworker increases with rank.
- Among the three rank groups, only junior enlisted personnel showed a slight but significant increase in their confidence in being able to count on someone they work with for help with a personal or family problem.

People you can count on for help with a family or personal problem: *CO-WORKER*

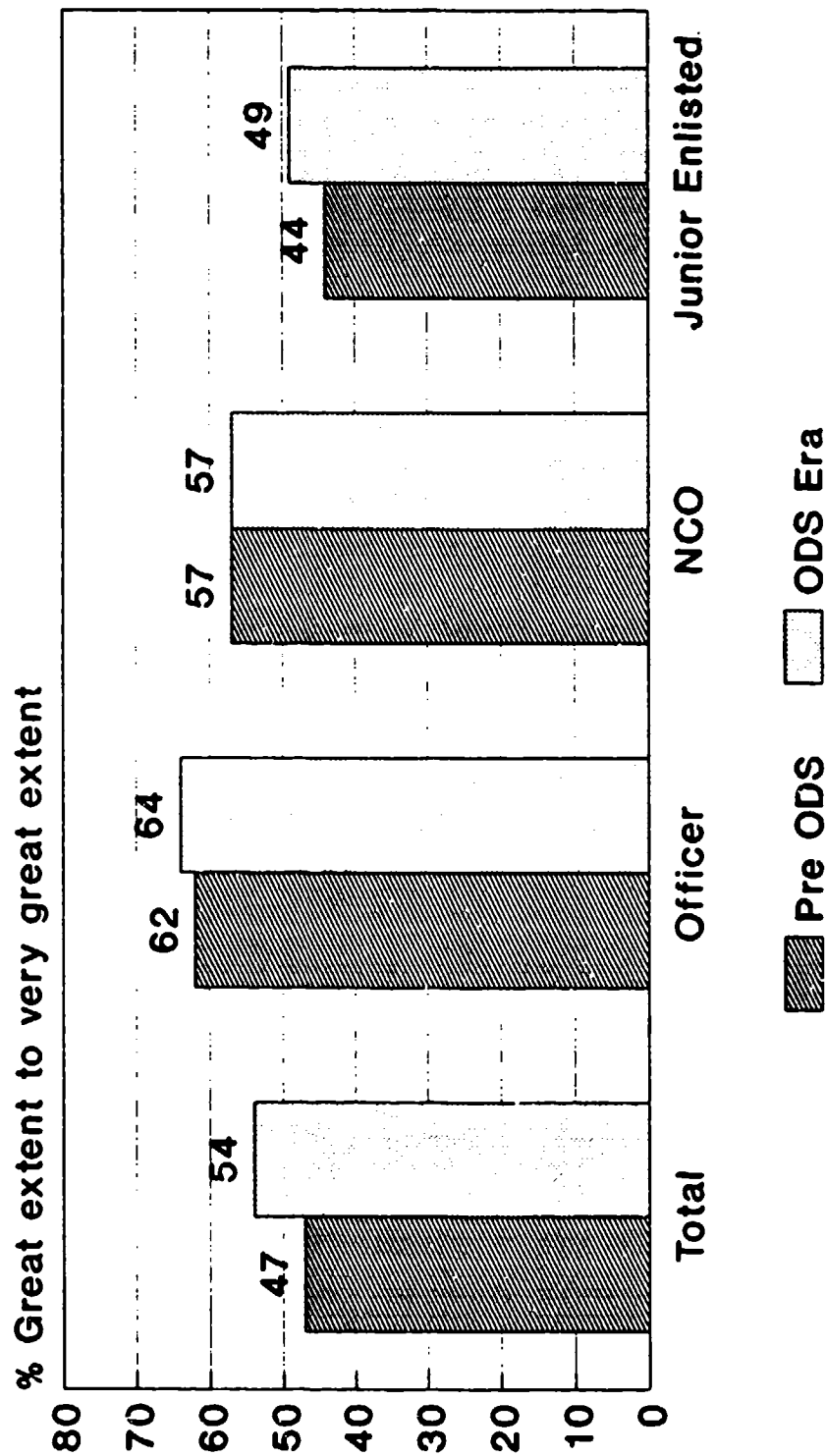


Figure 8. CO-WORKER

Figure 9: People you can count on for help with a family or personal problem:
Army friend or neighbor

Survey questions:

To what extent can you count on the following people for help with a personal or family problem?

A neighbor or friend who is in the Army

Pre-ODS vs ODS-era comparisons:

- For both pre-ODS and ODS-era soldiers, officers express the highest level of confidence in being able to count on an Army friend or neighbor for help.
- Only the ODS-era junior enlisted soldiers showed a slight significant increase in being able to count on a neighbor or Army friend for help with a family problem.

People you can count on for help with
a family or personal problem:
ARMY FRIEND OR NEIGHBOR

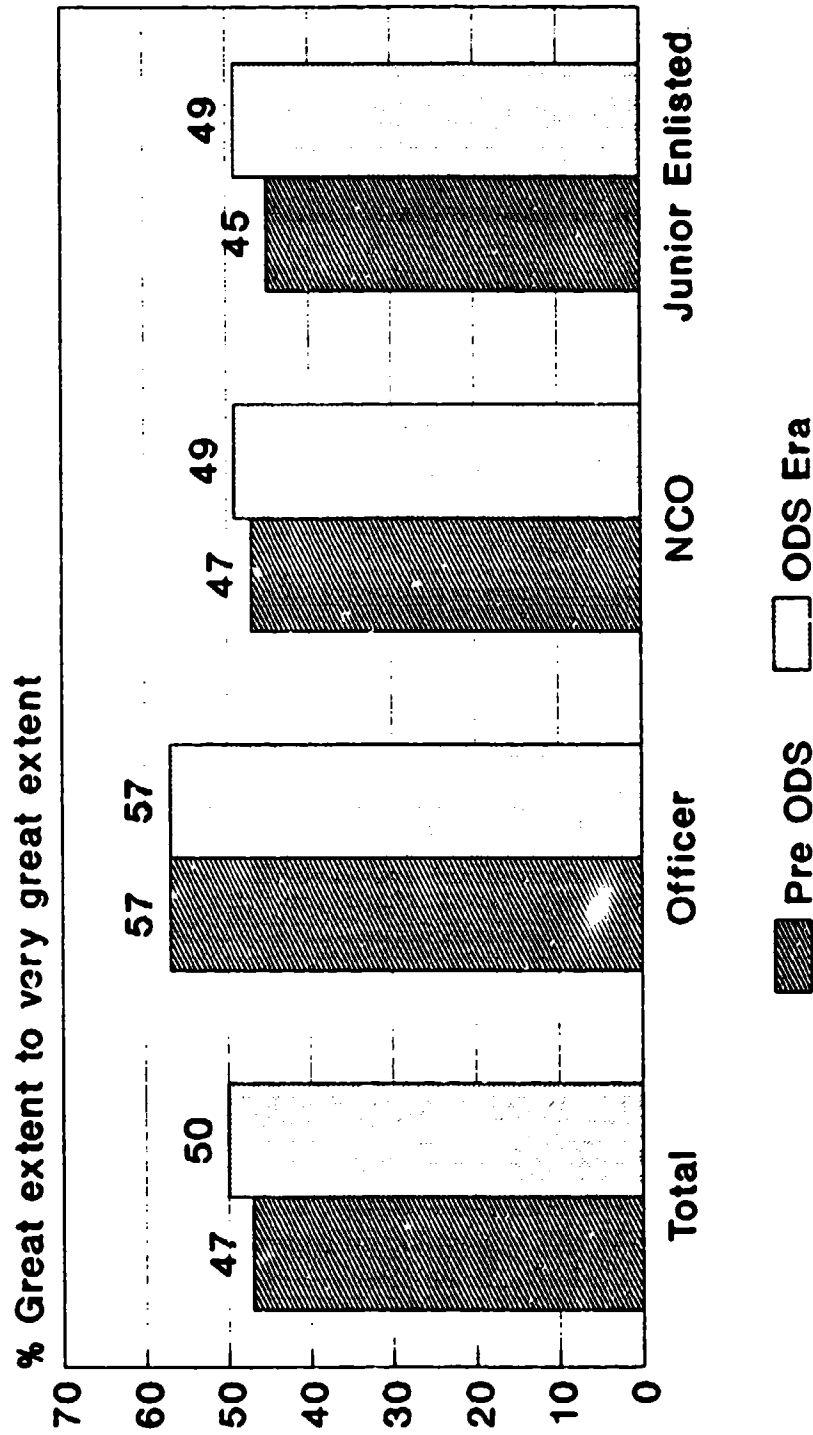


Figure 9. Army Friend or Neighbor

**Figure 10. People you can count on for help with a family or personal problem:
Civilian friend or neighbor**

Survey questions:

To what extent can you count on the following people for help with a personal or family problem?

A neighbor or friend who is not in the Army

Pre-ODS vs ODS-era comparisons:

- o Pre-ODS officers and NCOs were as likely to report similar levels of help from a civilian friend or neighbor as ODS-era officers and NCOs.**
- o ODS-era junior enlisted were slightly more likely than pre-ODS junior enlisted to report being able to count on help from a civilian friend or neighbor.**

People you can count on for help with
a family or personal problem:
CIVILIAN FRIEND OR NEIGHBOR

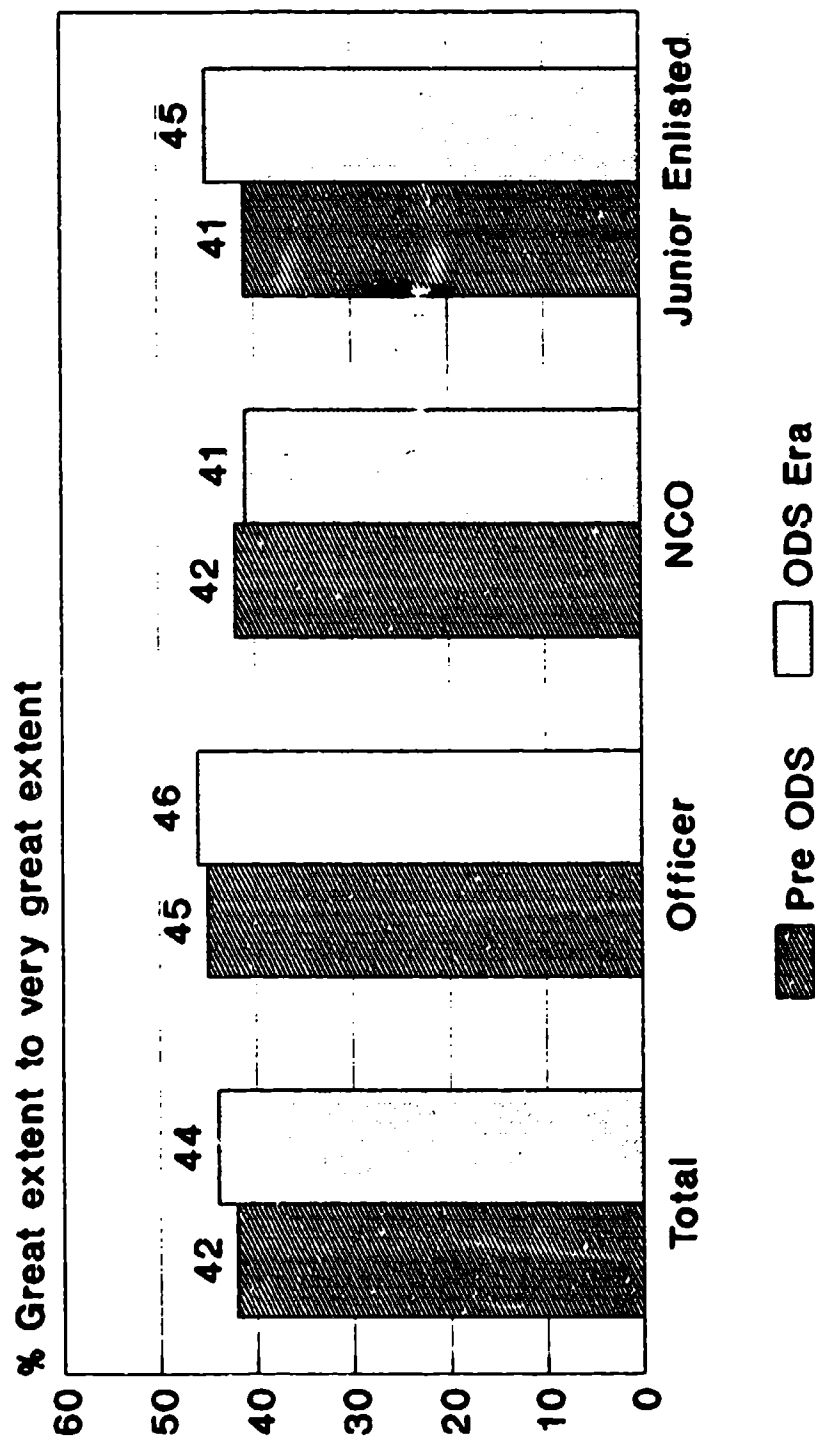


Figure 10. Civilian Friend or Neighbor

Figure 11: People you can count on for help with a family or personal problem:
Parents and relatives

Survey questions:

To what extent can you count on the following people for help with a personal or family problem?

Parents or other close relatives (not your spouse or children)

Pre-ODS vs ODS-era comparisons:

- The level of confidence in being able to count on parents and relatives for help with a personal problem was uniformly high across all rank groups for both pre-ODS and ODS-era soldiers.
- ODS-era officers were slightly more likely than pre-ODS officers to report being able to count on help from a parent or relative.

People you can count on for help with
a family or personal problem:
PARENTS AND RELATIVES

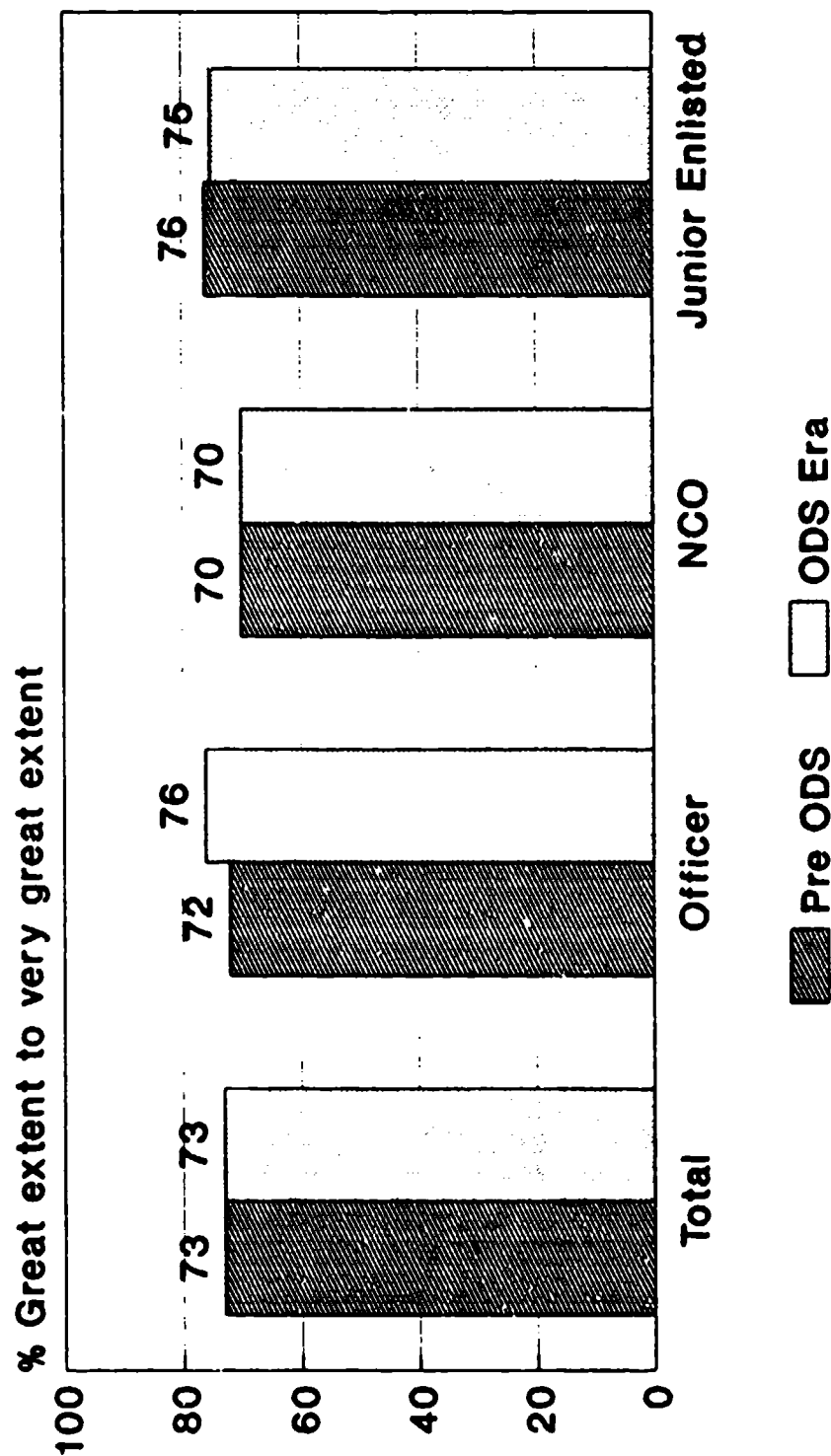


Figure 11. Parents and Relatives

Figure 12: Leader's concern for welfare of soldier's family in case of war

Survey question:

To what extent does the following apply to the leaders at your unit or place of duty?

If war broke out, the leaders of my unit would be concerned about the welfare of their soldiers' families

Overall:

• Most soldiers believe that if war broke out, their unit leaders would be concerned about their soldiers' families. This perception varies as a function of rank. The higher the rank, the more soldiers are likely to believe that the leaders of their unit would be concerned for the welfare of their families in the event of war.

Pre-ODS vs ODS-era comparisons:

• ODS-era soldiers (Total) showed a slight increase in their confidence that their unit leaders would be concerned about the welfare of soldier's families in the event of war.

• Although officers expressed the highest level of confidence in their unit leaders concern about their families in the event of war, ODS era officers ratings on this issue were the same as those of pre-ODS officers.

• ODS-era NCOs and junior enlisted were slightly more likely than pre-ODS peers to believe that their leaders would be concerned about their family's welfare in case of war.

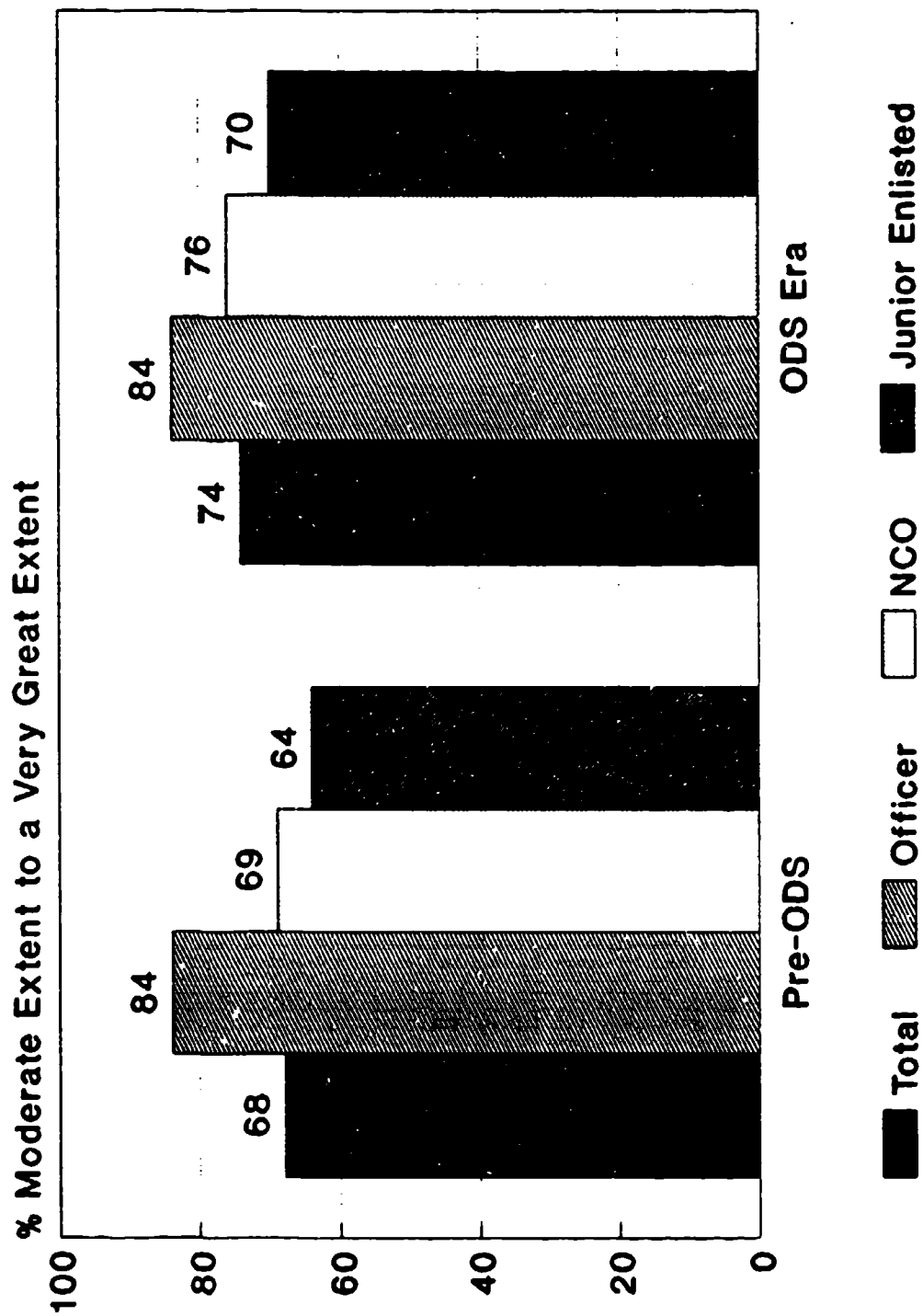


Figure 12. Leader's concern for welfare of soldier's family in case of war.

Figure 13: Do unit leaders know about Army family programs?

Survey question:

To what extent do(es) the following apply to the leaders at your unit or place of duty?

The leaders of my unit know about Army family programs

Overall:

- Over three-fourths of Army soldiers report that their leaders are knowledgeable about Army family programs.

Pre-ODS vs ODS-era comparisons:

- ODS-era soldiers (Total) are slightly more likely than pre-ODS soldiers to report that their leaders are knowledgeable about Army family programs.
- ODS-era officers reported the same level of confidence in their unit leaders knowledge about Army family programs as did their pre-ODS peers.
- NCOs and junior enlisted personnel are slightly more likely than their pre-ODS rank groups to report that their unit leaders know about Army family programs.
- Junior enlisted are slightly less likely than officers and NCOs to report that their leaders are knowledgeable about Army family programs.

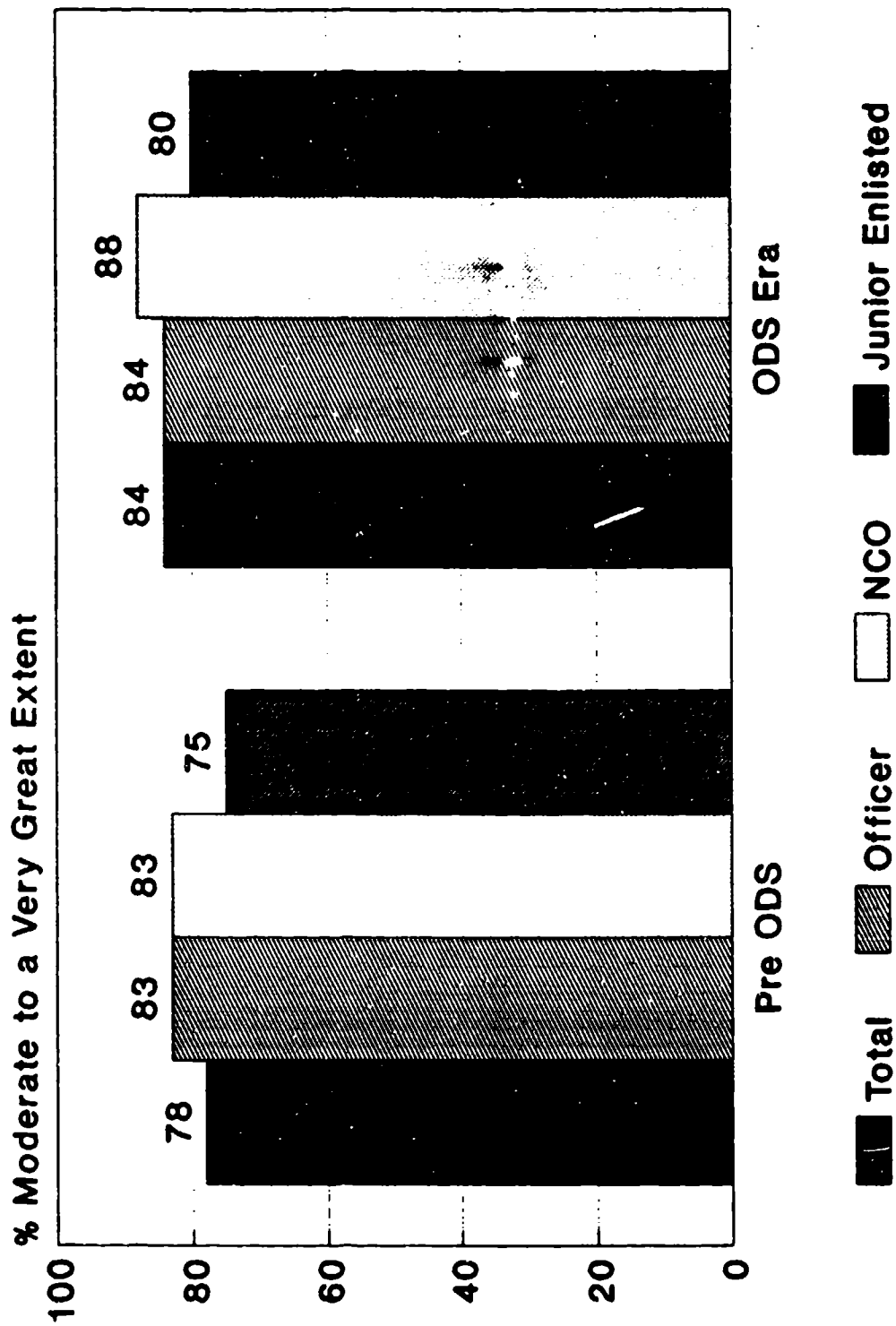


Figure 13. Do unit leaders know about Army family programs?

Figure 14: Do unit leaders encourage unit family activities?

Survey question:

To what extent do(es) the following apply to the leaders at you unit or place of duty?

The leaders of my unit encourage unit-wide family activities

Overall:

- Prior to Operation Desert Shield, about half of all active duty soldiers reported that their leaders encouraged unit-wide activities.
- Officers reported a markedly higher level of leader encouragement of unit family activities than either NCOs or junior enlisted personnel.

Pre-ODS vs ODS-era comparisons:

- ODS-era soldiers are markedly more likely than pre-ODS soldiers to report that their leaders encourage unit-wide activities.
- Pre-ODS NCOs were as likely as ODS-era NCOs to report that their leaders encourage unit family activities.
- Pre-ODS junior enlisted are markedly less likely than pre-ODS officers and NCOs to report that their leaders encourage unit family activities.
- ODS-era junior enlisted were markedly more likely than pre-ODS junior enlisted to report that their leaders encourage unit family activities.

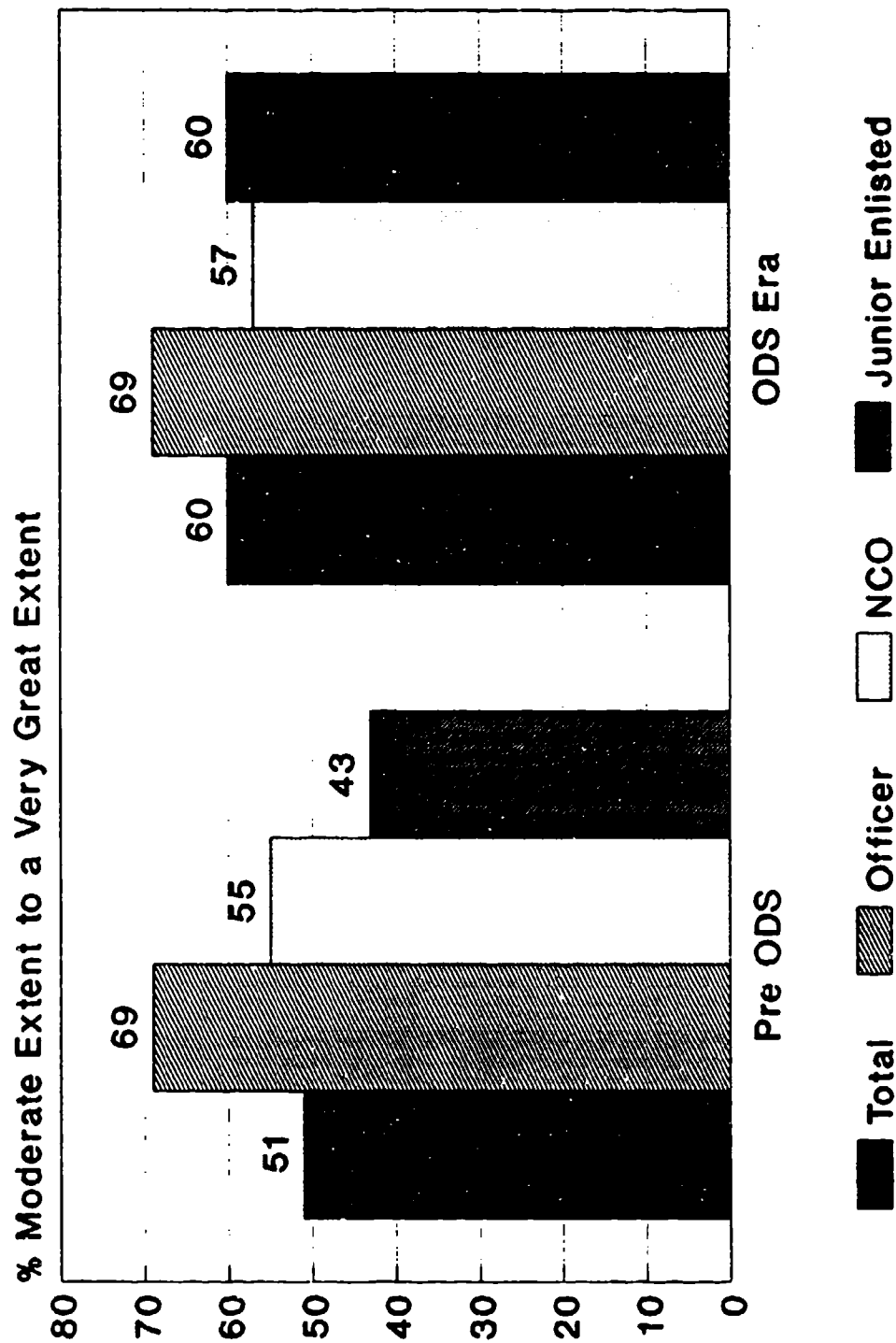


Figure 14. Do leaders encourage unit family activities?

Figure 15: How well has your family adjusted to the demands of being an "Army Family"?

Survey question:

In general, how well has your family adjusted to the demands of being an "Army family"?

Overall:

- Over half of all active duty soldiers report that their families have adjusted well to Army demands. However, the level of adjustment varied markedly as a direct function of rank. Officers reported markedly higher adjustment than NCOs, and NCOs reported markedly higher adjustment than junior enlisted personnel.

Pre-ODS vs ODS-era comparisons:

- Pre-ODS soldiers were as likely as ODS-era soldiers to report their families were well adjusted to Army demands.
- Pre-ODS officers and NCOs were as likely as ODS-era peers to report their families were well adjusted to Army demands.
- ODS-era junior enlisted are slightly less likely than pre-ODS junior enlisted to report that their families have adjusted well to the demands of being an "Army Family".

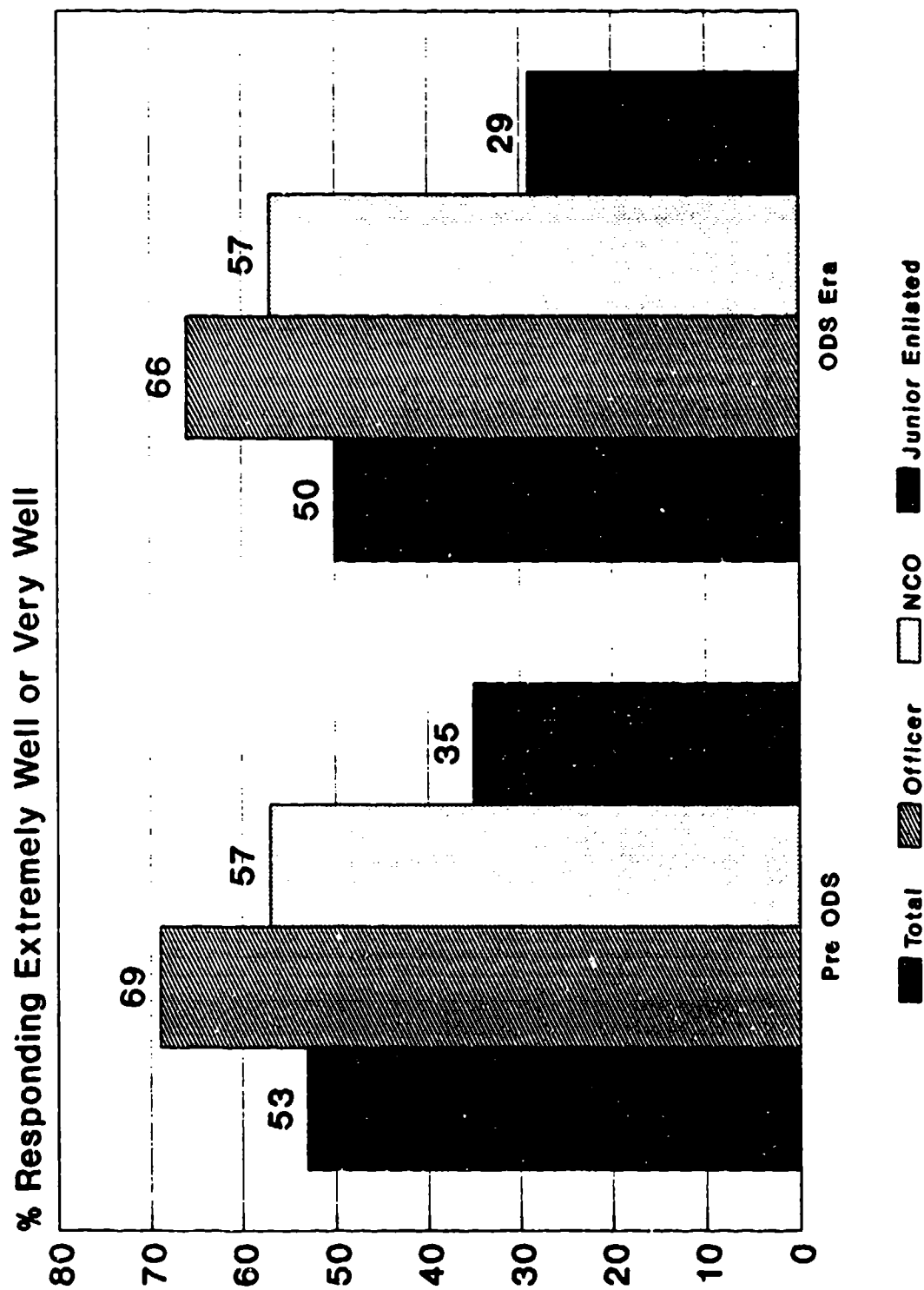


Figure 15. How well has your family adjusted to the demands of being an "Army Family"?

Conclusions

In general, this data shows that the ODS era soldiers are better prepared for deployment than their counter parts in 1989. That is, their personal affairs are in better order and they feel that their leaders and the general Army family "system" is better able to provide them needed emotional support. We also know from other sources that the shift in feelings towards the Army's family support system is not limited to this sample.

For example, the spouses of deployed soldiers in both CONUS and USAREUR are also more positive about the Army's family "system" (Bell, 1991 and Staff, 1991). The spouses of soldiers deployed from USAREUR are much more likely than the spouses of non-deployed soldiers to say that the Family Support Groups (FSGs), Family Assistance Centers (FACs) and Unit Rear Detachments (URDs) support their needs. Furthermore, these USAREUR spouses are joining and participating in Family Support Groups at a much higher rate (Staff, 1991).

If the feeling of being supported translates into a reduction in actual family problems, prior research would suggest that the Army will be better able to fight. Although those links are not explored here, the larger project that this research is imbedded in has and will be exploring many of those relationships.

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